



# JANUARY

## Safety message

Division of Environmental Services

### ...from the Division Chief

I would like to wish everyone a safe and Happy New Year. Winter is here, and with it comes hazardous driving conditions caused by storms, fog, and ice. As state employees we set an example, especially when driving. Remember to be aware of the speed limit, saving time is not worth the extra risk of getting into an accident. Leave more distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. It will take longer to stop in hazardous weather conditions than in dry conditions. Black ice can form on the road any time the air temperature drops below 40° F, especially with a wind chill factored in. If visibility is compromised, turn your headlights on (this is the law now if your windshield wipers are also on). Also, turn off cruise control when driving in hazardous conditions. This will allow you to respond quickly to any unanticipated dangers. Stay safe DES, and please continue to be careful, prudent, and defensive drivers both on and off the job.

Sincerely,

Dean Messer, Chief  
Division of Environmental Services

### Tips for Unsafe Driving Conditions

- Maintain Your Vehicle: check your battery, brakes, tire tread, tire pressure, defroster, heater, exhaust system, windshield wipers, keep your windows clear, put no-freeze fluid in the washer reservoir, and check your antifreeze.
- Pack For An Emergency: Flashlight, jumper cables, abrasive material (sand, kitty litter, floor mats), shovel, snow brush, ice scraper, chains, gloves, towel, warning devices (flares, cones, hazard triangle, flag for antenna), and blankets. For long trips don't forget food, water, medications, extra clothing, full tank of gas, and a cell phone.
- In Case of Emergency (Stopped or Stalled): Stay in your car, don't over exert yourself, put warning devices out, turn on the interior lights, clear the exhaust pipe then turn on the engine only enough to stay warm, use your cell phone to call for assistance.
- Plan Ahead: Check the weather, allow plenty of time to arrive at your destination, plan your route and familiarize yourself with the directions (even if you are using a GPS device), let others know your route and arrival time.
- Practice Driving in Challenging Conditions: Rehearse maneuvers slowly on ice or snow in an empty lot, steer into a skid, and know how your brakes will respond.
- Protect Yourself: Buckle up and use child safety seats properly, never place a rear-facing infant seat in front of an air bag. Children 12 and under are much safer in the back seat. Three out of four child safety seats are improperly installed. Go to [Car Seat Basics](#) for more information.
- Prevent Accidents: Turn on your headlights during inclement weather. Increase the distance between you and the car in front of you. Be aware of hard to see pedestrians and bicyclists. Don't drive tired. Designate a sober driver.

Think Safety visit <http://dessafety.water.ca.gov>; <http://swpsafety.water.ca.gov> for more information.  
Send Safety suggestions to: <http://dessafety.water.ca.gov>.